

Message Text

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LIMDIS

LENINGRAD FOR CONSUL GENERAL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UR, US

SUBJ: SPECIAL VISIT BY VOA TECHNICAL MONITOR

REF: STATE 211929

1. EMBASSY WILL OF COURSE DO ITS BEST TO SUPPORT VISIT OF VOA TECHNICAL MONITOR AS REQUESTED REFTEL. WE FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT FOUR WEEKS PLANNED FOR USSR IS MUCH MORE TIME THAT CAN BE USED EFFECTIVELY HERE BY MONITOR, GIVEN SOVIET RESTRICTIONS AND SENSITIVITIES, AND THAT EFFORT TO MONITOR EXTENSIVELY OUTSIDE US-CONTROLLED RESIDENCES WILL LIKELY BE SUBJECT TO INTENSIVE SOVIET HARRASSMENT.

2. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THIS MEANS THAT THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEMS MONITORING IN US OFFICES AND APARTMENTS IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD AND AT DACHAS OUTSIDE THOSE TWO CITIES. MONITORING WOULD ALSO BE POSSIBLE IN HOTEL ROOMS ELSEWHERE, ALTHOUGH THIS WILL BE SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE LOCAL JAMMING OF SORT EXPERIENCED BY PREVIOUS VOA MONITOR, AND WILL PRESUMABLY PROVE LITTLE MORE THAN THAT RL SIGNAL IS JAMMED IN MAJOR CITIES. (IF ADVANCE PARTY
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ESTABLISHED IN KIEV, US PERSONNEL WILL BE LIVING AND

WORKING IN SOVIET HOTEL.)

3. PROBLEMS ARE LIKELY TO ARISE IF ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO MONITOR ELSEWHERE. IT IS OF COURSE POSSIBLE TO STOP FOR PICNICS WHILE DRIVING BETWEEN CITIES, ALTHOUGH EVEN BRIEF STOPS ARE USUALLY OBSERVED BY SURVEILLANTS, AND EVEN WITHOUT MONITORING OR OTHER "SUSPICIOUS" ACTIVITIES, EMBASSY PERSONNEL ARE OFTEN REQUIRED TO MOVE ON PROMPTLY. FURTHERMORE, STOPPING IS TECHNICALLY NOT PERMITTED WHEN HIGHWAY PASSES THROUGH CLOSED AREA -- WHICH IS CASE FOR LARGE PART OF MOSCOW-NOVGORAD-LENINGRAD HIGHWAY. (LUGA IS OF COURSE TOTALLY IN CLOSED AREA, AND IT IS HARDLY CONCEIVABLE THAT SOVIETS WOULD PERMIT VISIT THERE.)

4. AS FAR AS VISIT TO ALMA ATA IS CONCERNED. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT EMBASSY HAS NO MEANS TO PROVIDE USG CAR THERE. NORMALLY ONLY INTOURIST CARS WITH SOVIET CHAUFFEURS ARE AVAILABLE. IT ALSO SHOULD BE NOTED THAT TIMING OF MONITOR'S VISIT IS LIKELY TO COINCIDE WITH SET-UP PERIOD OF PHOTOGRAPHY USA EXHIBIT. USIA MAY WISH CONSIDER ADVISABILITY OF ATTEMPTING THIS MOST SENSITIVE EFFORT IN THAT LOCATION AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME.

5. AS FOR DRIVING OUTSIDE CITIES IN GENERAL, WE ASSUME THAT PLANNERS ARE AWARE THAT SOVIET TRAVEL REGULATIONS DO NOT PERMIT DRIVES OUTSIDE A 40-KM RADIUS FROM CENTER OF CITIES PERSONS ARE AUTHORIZED TO VISIT, AND THAT SUCH DRIVES, EVEN IF PERMITTED, WILL PROBABLY BE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SURVEILLANCE. LATTER IS TRUE A FORTIORI WHEN CITY IS "OPEN CITY IN CLOSED AREA" (E.G., NOVGOROD, ALMA-ATA).

6. FINALLY, WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT WHILE DISCREET MONITORING OF VOA HAS NOT NORMALLY DRAWN SIGNIFICANT SOVIET INTERFERENCE, LAST MONITORING TRIP DID, WHICH MAY INDICATE INCREASING SOVIET SENSITIVITY TO THIS ACTIVITY. SOVIETS WILL OBVIOUSLY CONSIDER MONITORING OF RL AND RFE A MORE DISTASTEFUL ACTIVITY THAN MONITORING VOA. ALSO, WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY LOCAL KGB OFFICES, WILL BE CAPABLE OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN EFFORT TO MONITOR EXTERNAL BROADCASTS

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AND MONITORING OF SOVIET ELECTRONIC EMISSIONS, AN ACTIVITY WHICH WOULD BE BOTH ILLEGAL AND HIGHLY PROVOCATIVE.

7 IN SUM, WE DOUBT THAT, EXCEPT FOR MONITORING AT EMBASSY DACHA NEAR MOSCOW AND CONGEN DACHA NEAR LENINGRAD, EFFORT IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE VERY MUCH HARD EVIDENCE. ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WITH INGENUITY AND LUCK SOME MEASUREMENTS CAN BE MADE OUTSIDE OTHER CITIES, THE

WHOLE EFFORT WILL INCUR SUBSTANTIAL RISKS AND THERE IS DOUBT IN OUR MIND THAT THE POTENTIAL RESULTS JUSTIFY THE RISKS INVOLVED.

8. IF IT IS DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH PLAN, EMBASSY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROVIDE CAR AND ESCORT OFFICER TO EXTENT POSSIBLE. IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WILL BE EXTREMELY BUSY PERIOD FOR P&C AND FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF EMBASSY, AND DETAILING EMBOFFS FOR EXTENSIVE PERIODS OF TIME TO THIS PROJECT WILL INEVITABLY DIMINISH EMBASSY'S CAPACITY TO SUPPORT FULLY SOME OF THE OTHER IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR THIS PERIOD.
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